

I. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions of claims in the application.

1. *(Currently amended)* A method of processing a request for a connection through a multi-service gateway, comprising:
 - determining a usage level of a resource pool; and
 - determining a priority level of the connection request,
 - if the usage level is below a pool occupancy threshold that is a function of the priority level of the connection request, allocating resources from the resource pool to satisfy the connection request;
 - if the usage level is not below the occupancy threshold, allocating resources from the resource pool to satisfy the connection request only if the priority level of the connection request is higher than a ~~[[pre-determined level]]~~ priority threshold.
2. *(Cancelled)*
3. *(Previously presented)* The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising receiving the connection request prior to allocating resources from the resource pool.
4. *(Previously presented)* The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising receiving the connection request from a connection server/broker prior to allocating resources from the resource pool.
5. *(Cancelled)*
6. *(Previously presented)* The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the priority level of the connection request is a function of the type of traffic carried by the requested connection.

7. *(Cancelled)*
8. *(Cancelled)*
9. *(Previously presented)* The method as claimed in claim 6, wherein each connection request is associated to a type of traffic selected from the group consisting of originating, terminating, feature and progress.
10. *(Previously presented)* The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the priority level of progress traffic is greater than the priority level of feature traffic, which is greater than the priority level of terminating traffic, which is greater than the priority level of originating traffic.
11. *(Previously presented)* The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the processing resources are software resources for processing packets.
12. *(Previously presented)* The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the processing resources are port processing resources.
13. *(Currently amended)* The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the processing resources are configured ~~[[adapted]]~~ to perform conversion of a signal from a circuit-switched format to a packet-switched format.
14. *(Previously presented)* The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein the circuit-switched format is a time-division-multiplexed (TDM) format.
15. *(Previously presented)* The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein the packet-switched format is an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) format or an Internet Protocol (IP) format.
16. *(Previously presented)* The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:
if no processing resources are allocated to satisfy the connection request,
blocking the connection request.

17. *(Previously presented)* The method as claimed in claim 15, further comprising reporting blockage of the connection request to a connection server/broker.
18. *(Previously presented)* The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:
 - determining whether circuit-switched connection resources are required to satisfy the connection request; and
 - if circuit-switched connection resources are required to satisfy the connection request, setting a cross-connect mapping for controlling the circuit-switched connection resources.
19. *(Previously presented)* The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising selecting the pool occupancy threshold to achieve a probability of blocking that is less than a pre-determined value.
20. *(Currently amended)* A multi-service gateway, comprising:
 - a plurality of packet-switched ports;
 - a pool of port processing software entities (PPSEs), each PPSE having sufficient capacity to provide processing for any of the packet-switched ports; and
 - a resource manager configured ~~[[adapted]]~~ to execute a method comprising receiving connection requests and, if a particular connection request involves at least one of the packet-switched ports, allocating a subset of the PPSEs in the pool for satisfying the particular connection request, as a function of a priority level of the particular connection request, as a function of a usage level of the pool and as a function of a pool occupancy threshold, wherein said allocating comprises:
 - determining the usage level of the pool; and
 - if the usage level is below the pool occupancy threshold, allocating resources from the resource pool to satisfy the connection request;
 - if the usage level is not below the occupancy threshold, allocating resources from the pool to satisfy the connection request only if the priority level of the connection request is higher than a priority threshold.

21. *(Cancelled)*
22. *(Currently amended)* The multi-service gateway as claimed in claim 20 ~~[[24]]~~, wherein the resource manager is configured ~~[[adapted]]~~ to determine the priority level of the connection request.
23. *(Previously presented)* The multi-service gateway as claimed in claim 20, wherein each PPSE has the capability to perform conversion of a signal from a circuit-switched format to a packet-switched format.
24. *(Previously presented)* The multi-service gateway as claimed in claim 23, wherein the circuit-switched format is a time-division-multiplexed (TDM) format.
25. *(Previously presented)* The multi-service gateway as claimed in claim 23, wherein the packet-switched format is an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) format or an Internet Protocol (IP) format.
26. *(Previously presented)* The multi-service gateway as claimed in claim 20, wherein the resource manager is further adapted to block the connection request if no resources are allocated to satisfy the connection request.
27. *(Previously presented)* The multi-service gateway as claimed in claim 26, wherein the resource manager is further adapted to report blockage of the connection request to a connection server/broker.
28. *(Previously presented)* The multi-service gateway as claimed in claim 20, further comprising a plurality of circuit-switched ports and a set of circuit-switched connection resources, wherein the resource manager is further adapted to determine whether circuit-switched connection resources are required to satisfy the connection request and, if circuit-switched connection

resources are required to satisfy the connection request, setting a cross-connect mapping for controlling the circuit-switched connection resources.

29. *(Currently amended)* A multi-service gateway, comprising:
- means for receiving a connection request;
 - means for determining a usage level of resources in a resource pool in the multi-service gateway; and
 - means for allocating resources from the resource pool to satisfy the connection request if the usage level of the pool is below an occupancy threshold that is a function of the priority level of the connection request, otherwise determining a priority level of the connection request and allocating resources from the pool to satisfy the connection request only if the priority level of the connection request is higher than a ~~[[pre-determined level]]~~ priority threshold.
30. *(Currently amended)* Computer-readable media tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a resource manager to perform a method of processing a received request for a connection through a multi-service gateway, the method comprising:
- determining a usage level of resources in a resource pool in the multi-service gateway; and
 - allocating resources from the resource pool to satisfy the connection request if the usage level of the pool is below an occupancy threshold that is a function of the priority level of the connection request, otherwise determining a priority level of the connection request and allocating resources from the pool to satisfy the connection request only if the priority level of the connection request is higher than a ~~[[pre-determined level]]~~ priority threshold.
31. *(Currently amended)* At least one computer programmed to execute a process for processing a received request for a connection through a multi-service gateway, the process comprising:
- determining the usage level of a resource pool in the multi-service gateway; and

if the usage level is below a pool occupancy threshold that is a function of the priority level of the connection request, allocating resources from the resource pool to satisfy the connection request;

if the usage level is not below the occupancy threshold, allocating resources from the pool to satisfy the connection request only if the priority level of the connection request is higher than a ~~[[pre-determined level]]~~ priority threshold.